

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: DECONTROL JANUARY 1, 1977

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, EEC

SUBJECT: EC WINE LABELLING

REF: (A) STATE 004907, (B) 75 STATE A-6511

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: MISSION OFFICERS MET WITH COMMISSION OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS THE MATTERS RAISED IN REF A. THE COMMISSION OFFICIALS, WHILE NOT GIVING A FORMAL RESONSE, INDIATED THEY'RE THINKING POSITIVELY ABOUT WINE CONSULTATIONS IN THE SPRING. SOME EXCHANGE ON THE BASIC ATTITUDES OF THE TWO SIDES, AND MORE ON THE SPECIFICS RAISED IN REF A, TOOK PLACE, BUT WITHOUT MUCH NEW COMING OUT. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE ANOTHER MISSION/COMMISSION DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT BEFORE THE WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. MISSION OFFICERS MET WITH COMMISSION OFFICIALS LOERKE (DG I), REICHARDT (DG VI), DE PASCALE (DG VI), TULLY (DG I) AND GANGEMI (DG I) TO DISCUSS STATUS OF LABELLING AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AFFECTING US WINE IMPORTS AND TO RE-EXTEND THE US INVITATION FOR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON PER REF A. WE CONVEYED VIRTUALLY ALL THE POINTS IN REF A, BUT GOT REPORTABLE RESPONSES AS NOTED BELOW. THE COMMISSION OFFICIALS STATED THAT THEY WOULD CONVEY OUR INVITATION TO THEIR SUPERIORS. WHILE THEY REFRANIED FROM GIVING US A FORMAL AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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US SUBMISSION OF GEOGRAPHIC AND VARIETY LISTS HAS REMOVED

ONE HITCH, AND IT APPEARS THAT THE COMMISSION IS ANXIOUS TO MEET WITH US OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS WINE, PARTICULARLY QUESTIONS RELATING TO ACCESS OF EC WINE INTO THE US. DR. REICHARDT AND MME. DE PASCALE FELT THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO MEET WITH THE US BEFORE A COMMUNITY POLICY IS WORKED OUT ON GENERIC APPELLATION, WHICH WOULD MEAN, THEY FIGURE, NOT BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF APRIL.

3. THE COMMISSION WAS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE US AT THIS TIME A FORMAL REACTION TO THE US LIST OF WINE VARIETIES AND GEOGRAPHIC APPELLATIONS BUT DR. REICHARDT WAS PLEASED TO GIVE US HIS OWN INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS NO PROBLEM WITH THE US GEOGRAPHICAL APPELLATIONS SUBMITTED (REF B). HOWEVER, THE SITUATION WAS MORE "DELICATE" FOR THE US GRAPE VARIETIES. HE CITED IN PARTICULAR SUCH VARIETIES AS PINEAU DE LA LOIRE AND GAMAY BEAUJOLAIS. REICHARDT SAID THAT THE EC LABELLING REGULATIONS WILL INCLUDE A LIST OF GRAPE VARIETIES THAT THE EC CAN ACCEPT AND AN ANNEX OF OTHER MORE TROUBLESOME GRAPE VARIETIES WHICH ANY MEMBER STATE COULD ALLOW INTO ITS OWN MARKET DURING A TRANSITION PERIOD. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT ALL US GRAPE VARIETIES SUBMITTED WILL APPEAR ON EITHER THE ACCEPTED LIST OR THE ANNEX. THUS IT COULD HAPPEN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE UK, WHICH HAS NO PARTICULAR REGIONAL APPELLATIONS TO PROTECT, COULD APPROVE THE IMPORTATION OF WINES WITH "PINEAU DE LA LOIRE" APPEARING ON THE LABEL. DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD THE EC, ACCORDING TO DR. REICHARDT, WOULD HOPE TO WORK OUT WITH THE US THE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING SYNONYMS FOR US GRAPE VARIETIES WHICH MAKE REFERENCE TO EC REGIONS. THERE WOULD THEN BE NO PROBLEM FOR THEIR BEING IMPORTED THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY AT SOME FUTURE TIME.

4. REGARDING THE REQUIREMENT THAT EXPORTING COUNTRIES MUST CERTIFY THAT THEIR WINE IS PRODUCED ACCORDING TO THE ENOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF A PARTICULAR EC VITICULTURAL ZONE, REICHARDT SAID THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US LAST JULY HAD CONVINCED THE COMMISSION THAT THIS WAS UNWORKABLE. ACCORDINGLY, THE COMMISSION HAD PROPOSED TO THE COUNCIL THAT IN LIEU OF THIS REQUIREMENT, EXPORTERS BE ASKED TO CERTIFY THAT THEIR WINE HAD NOT BEEN PRODUCED ACCORDING TO CERTAIN SPECIFIED FORBIDDEN PRACTICES. THIS PROPOSAL HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL SINCE IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORMS PART OF THE PACKAGE OF COMMISSION PROPOSALS TO REFORM THE WINE CAP. COUNCIL ACTION IS AT A STALEMATE BECAUSE THE ITALIANS REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE ANY PART OF THE WINE PROPOSALS WHILE THE FRENCH MAINTAIN THEIR BORDER TAX ON ITALIAN WINE. HOWEVER, COMMISSION OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSAL ENTAILING USE OF A LIST OF FORBIDDEN PRACTICES WILL BE ADOPTED FINALLY SOME TIME IN THE EARLY SPRING.

5. THE EC APPEPTS THE GEOPGRAPHICAL AREAS SUBMITTED BY THE US. REICHARDT REPEATED WHAT HE SAID IN JULY, THAT IF WINE FROM A SMALL AREA (E.G., NAPA VALLEY) MET THE ORIGIN REQUIREMENTS FOR A LARGE AREA, LIKE CALIFORNIA, "NAPA VALLEY" COULD BE PUT ON THE LABEL, SO LONG AS "CALIFORNIA" WAS ALSO ON THE LABEL.

6. COMMISSION OFFICIALS SAID THAT THEY DO NOT EXPECT ADOPTION OF BROAD EC FOOD LABELLING STANDARDS BEFORE QUITE SOME TIME. EVEN AFTER A COMMON POLICY IS ADOPTED ON FOOD LABELLING STANDARDS, IT IS EXPECTED THAT IT WILL PROVIDE THAT EC COMMISSION REGULATION NO. 2133/74 CONTINUE TO BE THE DETERMINING REGULATION FOR LABELLING OF WINE.

7. THE COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES AT THE MEETING TRIED TO AVOID ANY PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE WITH US ON THE MERITS OF THE EC LABELLING STANDARDS, AS THIS WOULD BE A REHASH OF THE JULY CONSULTATIONS. HOWEVER, THEY LET BE KNOWN THEIR CONTINUING GENERAL ATTITUDES ON THE ISSUE WHICH WASHINGTON CAN EXPECT TO FACE DURING FUTURE CONSULTATIONS. LOERKE FELT THAT THE US WAS COOPERATING WITH THE E C ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS TO WORK OUT ANY PROBLEMS THE US HAS WITH EC WINE LABELLING STANDARDS. HIS UNDERSTANDING IS THAT WHEN THE US SAYS IT CONTINUES TO CONTEMPLATE REQUESTING A PERMANENT EXEMPTION FROM THE LABELLING REGULATION, THE US IS PRESERVING A FALLBACK IN CASE IT IS UNSUCCESSFUL IN WORKING OUT WHAT IT WOULD CONSIDER ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION.

8. SOME INDICATION OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH SOLUTIONS BEING ACHIEVED WAS GIVEN BY DR. REICHARDT, WHO STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THE EC CANNOT LOWER ITS LABELLING STANDARDS ON GRAPE VARIETIES AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS. SOME MEMBER STATES ALREADY CONSIDER IT UNACCEPTABLE THAT THE REGULATIONS ALLOW DEROGATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO 85 PERCENT. REICHARDT SAID THAT ALL MAJOR WINE EXPORTING COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE THAT HIGHER STANDARDS ENSURE A QUALITY PRODUCT AND THAT A LOW STANDARD, OF, SAY, 51 PERCENT ON GRAPE VARIETIES, IS NOT A VERY GOOD ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE QUALITY OF THE WINE. WHILE REICHARDT IS SPEAKING AS A "TECHNICIAN" AND NOT A POLICY OFFICIAL, HE PRESUMABLY REFLECTS THE ATTITUDES OF WINE INTERESTS IN THE COMMUNITY.

9. THE COMMISSION SIDE NOTED THAT A FURTHER PREPARATORY AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING WOULD BE DESIRABLE BEFORE THE WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS; AT THAT TIME THEY MIGHT HAVE FURTHER SPECIFICS TO OFFER. WE AGREED TO MEET WHEN THEY ARE READY. GREENWALD

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